

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 AF-08 IO-13

OPIC-03 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 OMB-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 EA-07 /100 W

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O R 181546Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7149

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3308

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: PCP NOMINATES OWN MAN FOR
PRESIDENT

REF: (A) LISBON 3265 (DTG 17150Z MAY 76),

(B) LISBON 3154 (DTG 121515Z MAY 76),

(C) IR 6-879-0179-76 MAR 24, 1976)

SUMMARY: COMMUNISTS RESOLVED DILEMMA OF WHICH PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATE TO SUPPORT BY NOMINATING PCP SECRETARIAT MEMBER
OCTAVIO PATO. END SUMMARY.

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1. PCPC BACKS PATO: ALVARO CUNHAL ANNOUNCED MAY 18 THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD SUPPORT PCP SECRETARIAT MEMBER OCTAVIO PATO FOR PRESIDENT. CUNHAL SAID THAT, DESPITE ITS PREVIOUS RECOGNITION OF THE ADVANTAGES OF A MILITARY CANDIDATE, THE PARTY HAD DECIDED THAT A MILITARY CANDIDATE WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO PCP OBJECTIVES OF PREVENTING AN ANTI-COMMUNIST "HOLY ALLIANCE" AND PROMOTING A PS-PCP GOVERNMENT (REF A). CUNHAL ADDED THAT THE PCP WOULD NOT WITHHOLD SUPPORT FROM A MILITARY PRESIDENT. HE SAID THAT PATO'S NOMINATION SHOULD BE SEEN AS AN ATTEMPT TO EXPRESS PARTY AUTONOMY. CUNHAL HAD SOUGHT A MEETING WITH EANES MAY 17, BUT EANES WAS "TOO BUSY" TO SEE CUNHAL UNTIL THE FOLLOWING DAY. EANES HAD GIVEN THE PCP THE COLD SHOULDER ON A PREVIOUS OCCASION AS WELL (REF B).

2. EANES: MAOIST AOC ANNOUNCED MAY 17 SUPPORT FOR EANES CANDIDACY. EANES WILL LAUNCH HIS CAMPAIGN MAY 19 WITH A SPEECH TO THE NATION. EANES SUPPORTERS HAVE SET UP AN IMPRESSIVE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS ON SEVERAL FLOORS OF A NEW OFFICE BUILDING ON ONE OF LISBON'S PRINCIPAL AVENUES. STILL IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL STAGE, THE OFFICE PRESENTS A RATHER MILITARY APPEARANCE, COMPLETE WITH COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND HEAVY SECURITY. EMBOFF WHO VISITED HEADQUARTERS MAY 17 WAS RECEIVED BY MAJ. LOUREIRO DOS SANTOS, AN ASSOCIATE OF EANES IN ARMY. SANTOS SAID HE WAS NOT THERE "OFFICIALLY" BUT AS A "FRIEND OF THE GENERAL."

3. RIGHT-WING CANDIDATES: SEVERAL CANDIDATES ON THE RIGHT EDGED CLOSER TO ENTERING THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE:

-- GALVAO DE MELO: GEN GALVAO DE MELO TOLD THE PRESS MAY 17 THAT HE WILL RUN IF HE IS CERTAIN THE ELECTION WILL BE A REAL CONTEST. CDS SECRETARY GENERAL BASILIO HORTA TOLD COMATT MAY 17 THAT THREE GROUPS ARE COLLECTING NOMINATING SIGNATURES IN GALVAO DE MELO'S BEHALF. HORTA WAS FAR LESS CONFIDENT OF GALVAO DE MELO'S NON-CANDIDACY THAN CDS LEADERS HAVE LET ON IN PUBLIC.

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-- KAULZA: GEN KAULZA DE ARRIAGA SAID HE WOULD ANNOUNCE A DECISION ON HIS CANDIDACY WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.

4. SOARES TRAVELS: PS LEADER MARIO SOARES DEPARTS MAY 19 FOR BONN WHERE HE WILL TRAVEL WITH WILLY BRANDT TO MAY 22-25 SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN CARACAS. AFTER SI, SOARES WILL VISIT MEXICO AT THE INVITATION OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA.

5. RED SOLDIERS: THE MEDEIRA MILITARY GOVERNMENT ISSUED A STATEMENT MAY 17 WARNING THAT A "COMMUNIST-ORIENTED SUCCESSOR" TO THE LEFTIST SOLDIERS' ORGANIZATION, SUV WAS ACTIVE IN MADEIRA. THE GROUP, CALLED THE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES (ORFA), HAD ATTEMPTED TO INITIATE A HUNGER STRIKE IN THE MESS HALL AND DISTRIBUTED PAMPHLETS IN STREETS. THERE HAVE BEEN PREVIOUS INDICATIONS OF THE EXISTENCE OF A SUCCESSOR TO SUV IN MAINLAND PORTUGAL, BUT LITTLE SIGN OF OVERT ACTIVITY (REF B).

5. COMMENT: THE COMMUNISTS WERE FACED WITH A DIFFICULT CHOICE. CUNHAL TOLD "EXPRESSO" EDITOR AUGUSTO DE CARVALHO PRIVATELY THAT THE PCP WANTED TO BACK A WINNER, BUT EANES HAD OFFERED THE COMMUNISTS NO ASSURANCE OF SOMETHING IN RETURN. MOREOVER, MANY OF THE PCP RANK AND FILE SEE EANES AS A RIGHTIST. SUPPORT FOR AZEVEDO WAS AN UNCERTAIN PROSPECT AT THIS STAGE AS AZEVEDO STAFFERS ARE THREATENING TO RUN AN ANTI-COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN (REF A). THE NOMINATION OF PATO WILL BE POPULAR WITH THE PARTY RANK AND FILE, AND IS A USEFUL HOLDING AND BARGAINING POSITION. SHOULD THE CAMPAIGN DEVELOP IN SUCH A WAY AS TO GIVE THE PCP A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO TRADE ITS OPEN OR PRIVATE SUPPORT FOR SOME ASSURANCES, PATO IS THE IDEAL MAN TO STEP ASIDE QUICKLY.

6. PATO IS COMMONLY TOUTED AS THE LEADER OF THE MODERATE, OR BERLINGUER WING OF THE PCP. HOWEVER, WE DOUBT THIS CHARACTERIZATION SINCE PATO WAS HAND-PICKED BY CUNHAL, AND FOLLOWS THE PARTY LINE CLOSELY.
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